

If you have any additional comments about the culture of scientific integrity related to the foll... - Q79#1 - factors that hindered or supported your scientific integrity efforts at EPA - Please insert comments in the text boxes below

- 1 (b) (5)
- 2 Suppression by management.
- 3 National meeting were helpful
- 4 political appointees
- 5
Generally, I would say that Senior Bureaucratic Leadership does not value transparency across the Agency on science, and that has been a continuous and long-standing concern.
- 6 The main hindrance to completing scientific endeavors is that purchasing is extremely difficult, even for very inexpensive items. Another is the difficulty in getting the appropriate vehicle for the task, especially during Covid.
- 7 N/A
- 8 EPA likes to talk about scientific integrity, but at the end of the day, most decisions are based on left-leaning political agendas. Facts often take a back seat to liberal partisan politics.
- 9 (b) (5)
- 10 No basis to judge
- 11 actions in the political arena lapped over into all scientific areas in the last 2 years
- 12 None to my knowledge
- 13 No fear, whistleblower, etc. are not protective to save staff. (b) (7)(A)
- 14 none
- 15 Noticeable improvements in this area is happening with the change in leadership.
- 16 Timeliness
- 17 personal grudges and political opinions of issues like tribal and EJ matters
- 18 During the years of 2019-2020, and (b) (5)
- 19 SES and political appointees
- 20 (b) (5)
- 21 (b) (5)
- 22 Push back from colleagues who have different opinions or lack of open discussion hinders scientific integrity in (b) (6)
- 23 Politics and partisanship
- 24 There were too many bureaucratic layers imposed.
- 25 completion of repetitive tasks such as purchase card record keeping and ordering which take up time that could be used towards science and research
- 26 There was nothing that hindered scientific integrity. No one suggested that we alter our results to fit any agenda. The flipside is that (b) (5)
- 27 In the recent past, science was politicized and at times biased by an agenda that was not consistent with the EPA's mission.
- 28 Many staff are more competent scientists than the managers who decide what science is "correct".
- 29 (b) (6)
- 30 there seemed to be a lot of political fact checking, especially between the region and hq on final decisions
- 31 The career EPA employees in (b) (6) maintained a high level of scientific integrity. However, (b) (5)
Prominent examples of this include (b) (5)
There needs to be a mechanism to protect EPA employees from political pressure to create products that are not scientifically driven nor sound.
- 32
Scientific integrity is an important tool to protecting EPA's mission, however, in the wrong hands it can be used as a blunt weapon to criticize and intimidate other staff. I do not know where the line is drawn but most people care deeply if their integrity is questioned. (b) (5)
- 33 Well intentioned clearance processes that don't have a commitment to completion within a fixed reasonable timeframe
- 34 At the office level, career climbing of senior managers and political positions seem to hinder scientific integrity efforts.
- 35 Mostly politicians pushing bogus agendas, nothing hinders integrity of the data its all about how its interpreted
- 36 (b) (5)
- 37
(b) (5) Decisions were made independently of what the science/data concluded.
- 38 Political appointees with an agenda had undue influence over whether a scientifically sound product was released in a timely manner.
- 39 The Trump Admin. was a mess. Political leadership was disorganized and it was very difficult to get direct decisions from (b) (6) political leadership. (b) (6) staff had to learn about (b) (5) decisions made from other HQ offices. It was very clear that decisions that were being made during 2019 and up to 2020 election were based on private interests and not science.
- 40 My supervisor is always willing to take the tie to understand the problem and talk it through. Doesn't always work, but she also backs up her scientists, distinguishing between science work and regulatory work. This has helped relieve a lot of the tensions and pressures on the scientists.
- 41
(b) (5)
(b) (5)
- 42 A scientific integrity policy is useless if it is being fundamentally undermined by leadership. We must have a stronger oversight/whistle blower provisions to ensure that leaders can be held accountable when actively suppressing science to drive a specific outcome. (b) (5) -- where was the (b) (5) for past 3 years (and why?)
- 43 na
- 44 I felt ashamed to be associated with EPA during the final two years of the Trump administration.
- 45 none
- 46 Previous administration did not support scientific integrity.
- 47 Political driven suppression
- 48 Having a hard science education and college degree and valid professional experience have supported my efforts when I have been proven correct.
- 49 Agree
- 50 I witnessed even our scientific integrity officials finding justification to bend to the unscientific policy preferences of the prior administration.
- 51 hopefully EPA will remain committed to science-based decision making
- 52 I have no specific experience in this area.
- 53 Alaska State Politics and Federal Politics
- 54 (b) (5)
- 55 See comment on scientific products.
- 56 (b) (5)

57

Fundamentally I think where it was hindered was due to fear and trying to control the conversation around a topic to achieve a policy position. I think for those administrations that were more secure on the facts and their positions deriving from those facts they were more prepared to let the science unfold in the standard methods of the scientific community and to do the policy discussions as necessary regardless. I think the lack of discussion, in good faith, at the political levels (for example between certain factions in Congress) dramatically impacts the openness of addressing science in the open scientific processes that have developed over centuries.

58 Senior political appointees in previous administration had policy agenda not supported by current science.

59 Took away programs or deemphasized programs to focused on science.

60 (b) (6) is incredibly risk-averse and many staff do not feel senior leaders fight for them.

61 Open opinion & fairness of supervisors in (b) (6)

62 EPA culture supports scientific integrity *only if* it is valued by senior political leadership.

63

No factors that hindered my integrity efforts while at (b) (6), personally. But I feel like I've felt the repercussions of the suppression of scientific integrity from the HQ level.

64 My position does not include scientific integrity, however, (b) (5)

65

(b) (6), (b) (5)

66

(b) (5)

This does not yield "open expression(s)" unfortunately. [Copied and pasted in other answers]

67

Senior political appointees in HQ would not support the results of scientific and legal analysis of senior scientists and legal counsel at (b) (6) and HQ. (b) (5)

68 Not aware of that happening within my work bubble

69 I have repeatedly reached out to the scientific integrity office for guidance on peer-reviewed articles at EPA with no response.

70 Staff and career management often include policy conclusions in summaries of underlying scientific work.

71 Big and small "P" politics.

72 Supported by on-going training on scientific integrity.

73 (b) (5)

74 n/a

75 NA

76 no comments

77 narrow definition of ethics re: science, suppression of scientific input

78 Not certain

79 Where there is a strong push from political appointees the integrity of science can be swayed, something that through discussion and debate was often prevented during the timeframe this survey covers, but in rare instances technical scientific conclusions were overruled.

80 (b) (5)

81 In general, managers in (b) (6) have supported my scientific work; however, some are more cautious about the implications of the work than others. It would be nice to have more broad support of science.

82 Politics.

83 (b) (5)

84 There is a history of retaliation related to other topics from staff and management that impact scientific integrity.

85 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

86

My scientific work is hindered by QAPPs, SDMPs, PSTQs, internal review, and other administrative tasks that do not actually perform scientific QA. These tasks are supposed to add to other quality checks we may be doing as scientists, but due to limited resources (time) they often take the places of scientific data checks and work that might be done by the scientific staff. My work is further hindered by the lack of scientific staff devoted to actual QA like code testing, tool development, debugging, version control, technical training (coding languages), and code profiling. My work is further hindered by the constant pings to me to fill out various forms and systems and comply with systems. Consider that multiple hours of training for RAPID were recently offered and most staff attended at least 2 hours of training to interact with a system that is largely a webform. Some staff attended more than 2 hours. My scientific work is also hindered by research planning activities that divert my attention away from science. Research planning staff ping scientific staff for things like % project completed, names of partners, emails for partners, and other items. We are never pinged for meaningful scientific conversation. One thing that has been useful is data set hosting on data.gov as journals often require supporting data archives.

87

Integrity in general, not only about scientific matters, is a challenge for some EPA managers. This has been reflected in EVS scores trending downward the past decade.

88 N/A

89 In some cases there were extreme delays due to managerial review, which is not a swift process to begin with.

90 (b) (5)

91 none

92 National programs that won't listen to staff raising concerns on data quality and integrity.

93 Regional management through the division director are extremely supportive of scientific integrity. Statements by EPA officials above this level (or their silence) communicated that scientific integrity was much less important.

94 There were often administrative steps that delayed the timely release of decisions for public knowledge.

95 There is a need for additional training to external entities (e.g., state, tribes, etc.) in which EPA's scientific integrity policy applies.

96 (b) (5)

97 Scientific integrity efforts were hindered by people at the political level. Career level managers in my office made a heroic effort to maintain scientific integrity in very difficult circumstances. I was proud to work with my office's management team.

98 N/A

99 (b) (5)

100 Career civil servant management do not stand up to political interference. They also do not seem to care or understand what scientific integrity is.

101 (b) (6) is a great advocate for scientific integrity at EPA.

102

Political Appointees (hacks) whose primary purpose is to deter the mission of the Agency and go about doing that by implying that previously conducted science is erroneous.

103 (b) (7)(A), (b) (5)

104 The Trump Administration's overt efforts to undermine the role of science and scientific integrity and transparency

105 N/A

106 Political appointees at EPA HQs hindered scientific integrity.

107 none

108 External and internal agency politics.

109 (b) (7)(A)

110 N/A

111 (b) (5), (b) (6)

112 (b) (5)

113 Politicized messaging from the top down, (b) (5) Not
a Region-specific issue.

114 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

115 (b) (5)

116 The prior administration did not support transparency-- of any nature.

117 Decisions were made by political management with no regard to science. (b) (5)

118 Tight timelines

119 (b) (5)

120 It was supported at the Branch level. We were encouraged to continue our research with the highest scientific integrity. At the EPA level, science was often disregarded in decision-making. With that said, it was sometimes not covertly but openly disregarded ((b) (5)). When facts were provided that may not support new rules, they were disregarded.

121 I had no confidence that there was recourse. For example, a scientific integrity survey that was taken in 2017 or 2018 (in which these same concerns were expressed) was never published or open discussed to my knowledge.

122 An administration based on lies, corruption and crime greatly harmed EPA's reputation and integrity.

123 Finances

124 review by regulatory offices a strong disincentive to full discussion of issues

125 The political agenda of upper EPA management

126 none

127 While I don't work directly with scientific data, managers within the region would tell me that our division's work/decisions were being negatively impacted by upper-level decision-makers in Headquarters.

128 I have had no issues.

129 (b) (5)

130 The most egregious violations of scientific integrity were by political appointees, managers, and supervisors. Unfortunately, many of those managers and supervisors are still with the Agency. Leaders set the tone for the rest of the organization, and the message they sent was loud and clear: (b) (5)

131 Lack of communication from leadership about why certain decisions were made, where it wasn't clear what was science and what was politics.

132 (b) (5)

133 Our political leadership took every opportunity to hinder scientific integrity at the expense of America's health.

134 Hindered: none. Budget unaffected. Support for integrity: Independent 3rd Party Optimization highlighted in Administrator's "Superfund Task Force Report" as Recommendation #7 to speed cleanups, leading to more demand for optimization and technical support in 2019 and 2020.

135 Many layers of management review caused repeated delays in release of reports.

136 (b) (5)

137 I fall into the gray area where scientific integrity related to my work and products is professed by relying on specific regulatory language which often takes on a different meaning with different underlying assumptions when used by the general public or researchers not experienced in many nuances related to our data. These nuances may be publicly available but are buried under the shear volume of material.

138 None

139 Management sometimes downplays seriousness of situation and need for further investigation.

140 (b) (5)

141 suppression of a successfully working and completed scientific product

142 No

143 None for my specific work.

144 sometimes our enforcement division did not agree with us in the program side of the work.

145 management discussing changes to presentation slides on email chains that did not include me, then handing down decisions that I had to accept

146 (b) (5)

147 Over the past few years, release of products and ability to conduct research has been significantly slowed down.

148 In general, I think (b) (6) does a good job supporting staff efforts to do good science.

149 Trump Administration

150 politics

151 The establishment of the reorganization did not align those who had the art of communicating clearly with their new audience.

152 N/A

153 No comments

154 senior management (EPA lacks leadership) support; overt politicization; arrogance, condescension, distrust, disrespect, dislike of political appointees

155 (b) (5), (b) (6)

156 My superiors in the (b) (6) are very supportive and maintain a constructive work environment that is free from management interference. Peer review is conducted in a professional and in a non-conflicting manner, and we take comments in the light they were intended, meaning an improved product. They have many years of experience and understand the big picture.

157

Is this relevant? (b) (6), (b) (5)

Inspectors/Enforcement personnel are generally educated as scientists and engineers.

158 Lack of sufficient personnel to attain certain goals, but we were not allowed to mention that in a report as a reason for not attaining the goals.

159 So many "software systems" to document research becomes cesspool for failure

160 Scientific integrity was a joke under the Trump administration

161 My team is very supportive and congenial, which aides the effort of having high scientific integrity. It has been helpful that we constantly challenge ourselves and each other, and I feel that my thoughts are valued and respected.

162 Administrative review processes and inefficiencies can cause long delays in performing and publishing high-quality research.

163 the administration at that time (2019-2020)

164 biased agenda of previous leaders hindered research

165 I don't work in the scientific community. (b) (6)

166 Competing with ORD for research funding in the Regions is a challenge. ORD believes they are the only ones in the Agency that should conduct research.

167 (b) (5)

168 (b) (5)

169 (b) (5)

170 In one instance several years ago, I contacted the Science Integrity officer about an issue and never got a response. More recently I contacted the Science Integrity officer and it took two e-mails and a phone call, and even then a response was delayed. I responded back right away, and another 4 weeks have past since my second contact with the office. There seems to be a very poor response to issues raised with the Science Integrity Office.

171 Senior bureaucrats did not stand up for science. It appears that they attempted to appease political appointees by (b) (5)

172 The previous administration amplified the problems, but there remains an issue among career senior leaders that discourages differing opinions, particularly when it pertains to high impact decisions (b) (5)

173 none

174 staff are not allowed to be "in the know" on anything going on. (b) (5)

175 Never experienced any factors that hindered my scientific integrity efforts at EPA.

176

(b) (5)

177

The majority of our top scientific positions (ST, T42) are now begin used to fill administrative positions. Scientific integrity demands delivery of high quality science. High quality science is vetted and published in peer reviewed journals and panels. To deliver high quality science we need top tier scientists leading the design, planning implementation of our science. We have large numbers of people managing processes specifically designed and implemented to undermine our ability to deliver high-quality time-relevant scientific products. Discouraging for sure. I am working to train up the young people that come through. Will be eligible to retire soon - too soon to leave now.

178 The desire to focus on 'scientific interest' rather than Agency relevance in (b) (6) work is astoundingly ill placed and makes the entire organization suffer from the fiscal consequences of longstanding poor decisions..

179

Fostering open discussion between managers and staff, making it safe for mangers to admit that the don't understand something would help. This time period seemed particularly stressful for our managers and many levels. That makes taking the time and risk associated with scientific integrity less appealing.

180

How do you place guardrails to the SI process so that it will not be disregarded if everyone was corrupt and the individuals who attempted to protect the SI process were afraid.

181 Trump an Wheeler, etc.

182

(b) (5). Our weekly, mandatory, huddle meetings only discuss if reports are going to be on time.

183 NA

184 No factors hindered. Supervision & staff support each other in all aspects of data collection & analysis.

185 (b) (5)

186 (b) (5)

187 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

188 DOES NOT APPLY TO MY SUPPORT OF SCIENTIST

189 (b) (6) mgmt support, ASTM support, HQ hinderance.

190 Same as above

191 Science and the rule of law should be the supporting foundation to which decisions are made at the Agency. Far too often these pillars were ignored or clouded by other thoughts/misinformation that wasn't routed in the best available science or legal positions.

192 I am not a scientist, so several of these and previous questions do not actually apply to me, yet the survey required that I answer them.

193 See above, under open expression. Access to agency decision-makers has been limited since the Obama administration - at least that is the case in (b) (6). (b) (5)

194 (b) (5)

195 (b) (5)

196 None

197 (b) (5)

198 I comply to the Scientific Integrity efforts.

199 I think our quality assurance regional group had been weak/disorganized and did not provide support. They have recently become much better

200 N/A (hired 8/2019, in my role I only sensed the general climate and depressed morale. My supervisor supported my scientific integrity.)

201 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

202 (b) (5)

203 (b) (5), (b) (6)

204 (b) (5), (b) (6)

205 (b) (5)

206 Hard to do your job when you see the contorted logic the Upper upper Management at HQ used to defeat/delay critical programs

207

"Review" function to the highest political level where few to no people are scientists or have scientific training yet they were able to affect the message, delivery or science produced at EPA. It seems like "legal opinions" coming from qualified lawyers at EPA are sacrosanct, yet "science" is open to interpretation even by the uninformed.

208 Tended to be driven by particular individuals and their biases.

209 I do not do science

210 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A)

211 Based on the past four years, it would appear that EPA scientific integrity for political appointees depends entirely on whether they honor the policy. There appears to be no enforcement or consequences for not upholding the policy ideals, not including scientific information in decision-making, or excluding scientists and career managers from important science-based decisions. Although career managers generally seem to uphold and honor the policy, a culture can arise where the emphasis is for scientists to not make waves.

212 (b) (6) has a disdain for science. That permeated the agency through the political appointees. The news showed many instance of how political appointees meddled with science based decision and products.

213 The previous administration cared about the pro-industry image too much.

214 (b) (5), (b) (6)

215 Frist to the highest level of management. Even the lowest level of managers were complicit.

216 None noted.

217

(b) (5), (b) (6), (b) (7)(A)

218

(b) (5), (b) (6)

It needs to be evaluated and reigned in. Important and helpful research is being forced to operate on small budgets and be understaffed.

219 My first line supervisor does an excellent job reviewing my work and supporting my research.

220

Timeliness - I have been restricted from releasing data which has not completely undergone the QA/QC process, even though preliminary data would be helpful to the public

221

(b) (5)

222

(b) (5)

223 Past administration's pressure to on our office was intense. (b) (5). This role is fundamental to our office's mission.

224 The political appointees the last two years, at the EPA and (b) (6) level, heavily relied on delay and suppression of ideas to hinder the communication of scientific ideas and products.

225 Hindered: (b) (5)

. Supported: EPA's culture of trying to do the best science it can and release that to the public.

226 The administration

227

(b) (5)

228 Fear of reprisal by (b) (6) coupled with a lack of safety/coverage by senior EPA or (b) (6) leadership.

229 Lack of any real support for scientific integrity. "lip service" only is not helpful. There is no negative effect to going against the science or for violating the scientific integrity policy.

230 politics

231 Inadequate time at EPA to make an assessment.

232 funding and disinformation

233 None for me personally, but in reference to my two above answers I would say the interference and preeminence of political agendas

234 (b) (5)

235 (b) (5)

236 Staff would be wise to parrot the direction of management

237 political interference was actual or implied

238

(b) (5), (b) (6)

239 Fear of retaliation from the top trickled down and indirectly affected scientists.

240 (b) (5)

241 At one point, when I checked EPA's scientific integrity website to determine the (b) (6) the link to the Regional contacts was broken.

242 absence of laboratory standards, toxicity studies, and regulatory standards

243 Previous administration political team agenda impeded scientific integrity efforts despite the high quality work and and integrity of staff.

244

(b) (5), (b) (6)

245

(b) (5), (b) (6)

246 Senior officials sitting by and refusing to publicly denounce the gross mismanagement by Trump officials. The primary reason we have a civil service system is to protect the integrity of the agency and our senior career officials failed us for 4 years.

247 I was unable to collect field data due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

248 sometimes lack of management support or indifference

249 A lack of transparency of decision-making regarding science supporting policy, in particular from those political appointees with an agenda against the Agency or the work of the Agency

250 (b) (5)

251 Managers and management. Everyone in upper management previously worked in area at EPA before.

252 Supervisors and directors

253 Lack of transparent decision-making.

254

nothing specifically for me, but observed others within my office face unnecessary and unexplained delays in having scientific documents reviewed at the AA level.

255 Improve upper management understanding of federal guidelines for ethical use of human stem cell lines for basic research.

256 We do not use science in our decision-making as we should or we think we do. A lot is based on opinions of management.

257 lack of control to access and manipulate data (analytical, map data, etc.)

258

The issues are mostly with the mid-level management. Not as much with senior leaders or first line supervisors. Much of the problem is with these career people.

259 Science did not play a role in decisions being made on a major project I work on. (b) (5), (b) (6)

260 (b) (6), (b) (5)

261 (b) (5)

262 N/A

263 (b) (6) management was consistently supportive.

264

While not to the level of suppression, I have experienced a culture of caution among several managers in my office, (b) (5)

think it is important to be able to share preliminary results which could be useful to receive feedback on at conferences, with the proper review and disclaimers of limitations. Science is a process, and sometimes we come to the wrong conclusions, that need to be updated with newer data and experiments. This process is enhanced by communication and review by the scientific community. I wish the culture within (b) (6) managers could be changed to be more accepting of the dynamic process of science, and be ok with presenting our best knowledge of the state of science, without being 100% that it may not change in the future. Also, be ok with sharing data that some of our programs are not as effective as they were originally planned to be, and to be open and seeking to share and understand the reasons.

265

Poor managers who pretend to be experts in every discipline are a real problem. Also, the lack of real engagement by the scientific integrity office is a big hinderance. A yearly training session and this survey are good steps, but your office doesn't hold people accountable and lacks the real teeth to ensure scientific integrity is more than just a buzz phrase. How about a public accessible list of examples where poor decisions around scientific integrity are made and by whom? (b) (5)

Why should I make the effort if I'm going to be thrown to the wolves while your office revels in the platitudes of scientific integrity? You need to do better; this agency and our fellow citizens we are sworn to serve are worth it.

266 leadership's violation of scientific integrity policy

267 lack of a review process

268 no comment

269 In the past two years, my responses reflect different experiences with career and political officials. Career leaders were generally (not always) supportive of SI; the reverse was true for political leaders.

270 too many times political issues over-rode scientific results which made me feel "why bother"

271 Managers who felt their jobs are to please their bosses instead of telling them what they need to know. The scientific integrity officers, including (b) (6) who violated the scientific integrity policy and got away with it, further eroding trust in the entire process.

272

Hinders scientific integrity: (b) (5)

They do not realize how their actions, writing, and presentations hinder the scientific integrity of the agency and need to understand 1) scientific products are not based on what you expect/desire to occur and 2) producing a "lessons-learned" - type scientific article is what should be expected when your project design is a failure. Half of science is learning what does not work, and that information is incredibly important to others that want to replicate a project/study.

273 administration, political appointees

274 N/A

275 Not applicable.

276 A few staff members I work with cannot separate science from their personal agenda. The bias they have reflects their unwillingness to let the science determine their recommendations.

277 i was a new hire

278 (b) (6) management was clear that every effort would be made to protect the scientific integrity of the science product.

279 none

280 managers sometimes not understanding the complexity of scientific work that goes into making decisions and rushing a product sometimes

281 Admin Change

282 Scientific integrity is viewed as key for successful accomplishment of EPA's mission and goals.

283 (b) (5)

284 The infusion of politics into the scientific efforts

285 (b) (5)

286 need more resources to do the work

287 Our work was scrutinized, we had to repeatedly justify why we were conducting (b) (5), and our program was slated for elimination in every Trump budget. This had a chilling effect on us and harmed morale and made us cautious and muted.

288 The Division Director and managers value my evaluation of a site and my opinion about the path forward, which is encouraging to me.

289 (b) (5)

290 (b) (5)

291

I believe the last administration's open disdain for environmental regulation and climate change science was in direct opposition to and has severely damaged EPA's integrity

292 Again, at my "local" level, I felt that we were all acting in adherence with good scientific integrity processes, but the Agency overall was hijacked by officials who wanted to work against everything we were supposed to advance in terms of public health and the environment.

293 (b) (5). The main factor in hindered science is political interference.

294 Similar comment as that above, the bigger picture and connections to the enforcement world are not discussed or heard.

295 Excluding the community experience hinders the completeness of the data gathered.

296 Political appointees that had a strong opinion on what our science should or should not say.

297 (b) (5)

298

Transparency with the media regarding scientific discovery and process is vital to accomplishing our mission. I'm glad we are putting such a renewed focus on it.

299 (b) (5)

300 previous administration at HQ was not supportive.

301 I wish we would be more encouraged to use more academic sources

302 n/a

303 (b) (5)

304 (b) (5)

305 NA

306 (b) (5)

307 The Trump administration hindered scientific integrity at the USEPA.

308 EPA supervisors who were too afraid to let the science speak for itself.

309 Very specific to political team

310

It is difficult to feel your work is appreciated when it appears decisions are made at much higher levels with no apparent input from subject matter experts.

311 Involvement of political appointees in all scientific decisions damaged the credibility of the agency and my work.

312 Issues with HQ

313 None

314 (b) (5), (b) (6)

315 Management.

316 (b) (5)

317 (b) (5) We kept getting more administrative burden and less administrative support.

318 The former administration and officials from the former administration

319 Once write-ups or fact sheets went to the RA's office, (b) (5) (b) (5), despite his continued insistence that he was there to listen and help us with our work.

320 It is natural to consider how others may be upset by your opinions. I know that I have mentioned including certain components in research that were overlooked when I mentioned them. Later they were considered by other scientist and used in their research. I wasn't made "afraid" to voice my opinion. It was simply ignored. Eventually, I just didn't share anymore.

321 findings that contradicted current policy

322

EPA scientists maintain scientific integrity in their work. Office level decision makers also maintained scientific integrity. (b) (5)

323 (b) (5), (b) (6)

324 There wasn't much engagement with staff on projects that required scientific integrity.

325

(b) (5)

Instead we would rely on a contractor who is the lowest bidder, how does that affect your Scientific Integrity, hmm?

326 Thankfully, the last administration didn't seem to understand or have the political will to subvert the findings of the Superfund program.

327 (b) (6), (b) (7)(A)

328 Management ignored actions that should have been taken based on science. Delays were easily explained away but truly unreasonable.

329 The wolf guarding the henhouse.

330 "Quality Assurance" requirements have become excessive and onerous. They do not meaningfully assure quality, but rather are bureaucratic roadblocks to keep us tied up in knots without accomplishing anything.

331

General overwork hinders scientific integrity due to significantly low staffing numbers, and retirements and staff departures threaten to only make this worse near term.

332 (b) (5) the sharing of important results to communities that (b) (6) was providing technical assistance

333 (b) (5)

334 The belief that the earth was created by god and not a random explosion and evolution!

335 (b) (5)

336 When speaking up I was confident I would be ignored.

337 Management operating in an insular manner independent of their technical staff

338 (b) (5)

339 Promoting scientific integrity among my staff was made difficult when it was not being practiced by my managers.

340 Historically, we would interact with the upper level managers. However, this time we never briefed them, we did not interact with them, or share our research. They never saw our opinions. They never saw us.

341 (b) (5)

342 Prior (Trump Administration) political management had fixed views on many issues, and were therefore not as engaged in scientific findings to help to inform their understanding of issues or their decisions.

343 Some do not think the science behind the regulations are important to them.

344

There are major limitations on the ability to social science research within the organization (e.g., use political identity as indicator, or ability to survey Feds or public). Also, if the research is on a hot or controversial topic, (b) (5)

345 If anything, the previous administration demeaned us beginning the very first day Pruitt showed up, and then began to diminish EPA's role. At the end, they forced us to commute more with no regard to our personal lives and reduced our quality of life.

346 (b) (6)

347 Lack of scientists employed at FTE level hindered.

348 (b) (5)

349 Politics seem to govern, and those without the science backgrounds. How they can make decisions is beyond me. Also no protection for those that speak up or whistle blow, that is plain false, and not true

350 (b) (5)

351 My supervisor supported me, but fear of politicals hindered

352 politics got involved in science with negative results.

353 None

354 Direction by SES managers to collect data just to be able to say the Agency was collecting data.

355 The act of conducting surveys has been abused over the last 2 years. (b) (5).

The surveys haven't really been scientific in nature, but spoke more to uses of technology, etc. General staff need training and resources to be more effective in taking surveys or running projects that are supposed to do in-depth analysis based on user feedback. It's a waste of resources in conducting the survey and the ripple effects of poorly framed surveys are still being felt.

356 I am a new employee and cannot speak to the culture of scientific integrity prior to November 2020.

357 talk about making decisions for example: (b) (5), ect. makes your job difficult to continue to tell everyone EPA is looking at it.

358

The biggest factors that hindered my scientific integrity efforts were 2nd and 3rd line supervisors currently and in the past pretty blatantly disregarding the principles of the hatch act. Our previous administration had serious issues but that doesn't excuse a lack of professionalism then and now by my higher level supervisors.

359 The publication clearance process is extremely complex and burdensome and treats scientists like children. It should be significantly streamlined.

360 See previous comment.

361 We able to raise concerns to decision makers in briefing papers. Any decision would need to be vetted with HQ political leaders

362 EPA sometimes defers to states on matters related to science. (b) (5)

363 integrity.

364 None

365 Politics trumped science in 2019 and 2020.

366 My perspective was that timeliness of release of products/decisions was hampered at the political level in (b) (6).

367 However, overall I believe the management culture in (b) (6) supports scientific integrity.

368 Lawyers getting in the way.

369 Lack of transparency in decision making by political leadership made it difficult to support scientific integrity.

370

One Center-level management person actually replied "Ooooh," when informed of my participation. That person can't seem to remember my name either.

371

(b) (5). EPA during the last administration was appalling. Science and scientific integrity was readily abandoned by many senior managers. EPA must institutionalize much greater protections for science and science integrity beyond solely relying on employees to refute non-science and concurrently putting their jobs in danger.

372 The last administration hindered our science and our scientific integrity. (b) (5)

373

(b) (5)

374 I will not comment for fear of reprisal.

375 Previous administration's overarching disagreement with scientific integrity and the ability to make decisions based on science

376 (b) (5)

377 n/a

378 hindered = politics

379

(b) (5)

380 NA

381 None

382

(b) (5). They literally clawed back the little funding I had this year with no explanation.

383 My supervisors are a huge help in navigating all the different offices we need to communicate with about our findings.

384 NA

385 politics